

**CEPPS/IRI Quarterly Report: April 1, 2005- June 30, 2005**

**STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY IN MONGOLIA:**

**USAID Cooperative Number: 492-A-00-02-00010-00**

**Project Dates: May 3, 2002-September 30, 2005**

**Total budget: \$1,880,548.00 Expenses to date: \$1,703,378.40**

**I. Summary**

During this quarter, IRI focused on the women's forum and presidential elections, while continuing to work on the Parliamentary program. IRI also completed and presented a poll on the Presidential election to political parties and foreign observers. IRI and Mongolian members of Parliament (MPs) concentrated on building and strengthening the parliamentary procedures within the State Great Hural (SGH). IRI continues to work with legislators in the SGH to develop committee structures and to promote legislation of ethics standards. The legislation has been added to the docket for the spring session of the SGH and Ethics and committee rules will be voted on in mid to late July.

IRI successfully provided support for the most recent presidential election, which occurred on May 22. While the presidential election is not traditionally viewed as being as remarkable as the parliamentary elections, this particular election was an important indicator of the mood of the country. IRI undertook a six-week training program for poll watchers that spanned the past two quarters, beginning in mid-March and ending at the end of April. IRI trained approximately 1,350 party agents (for all political parties which fielded a candidate for the presidential election) as poll-watchers in a total of 27 "train-the-trainer sessions" in all 21 aimags and in the districts of Ulaanbaatar. The training included the distribution of 8,000 party poll watcher manuals and 6,000 voter education posters.

IRI also conducted a poll of citizen opinions and attitudes towards the government, candidates and Mongolia as a whole. The information from the poll was presented to political parties to help them develop campaign strategies that addressed the needs of the people and to foreign observers and US government officials to educate those working in Mongolia on civic opinion. Finally, IRI conducted an Election Observation (EO) on Election Day, visiting 72 polling stations in six aimags and the City of Ulaanbaatar in order to assess the effectiveness of party poll-watchers.

During this quarter, IRI, along with a domestic NGO Democratic Women's Union, successfully executed the groundbreaking April 25-27 Women's Forum on Democracy titled, "Women's Partnership in Politics and Governance." The forum, which culminated

two quarters worth of effort and planning, brought together prominent female leaders from across the country, as well as multiple international representatives, including keynote speaker, US Ambassador Ellen Sauerbrey, and a previously recorded speech from US Senator Diane Feinstein. The event, which featured numerous workshops and political development programs, helped women leaders develop long-term plans for increasing the involvement of women in Mongolian politics. The event also planted crucial seeds of cooperation and fostered linkages between women in political parties and civil society at the national level. The forum concluded with the presentation of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and the creation of the Women's Forum Auxiliaries which will serve as a national network of women leaders who will help plan and execute the next Women's Forum.

## **II. Background**

Since 1992, IRI has offered training and technical assistance to Mongolia's foremost activists and political parties. IRI trainings cover a full range of political party functions including grassroots organization, party-building, message design and communications. Additionally, IRI has provided technical assistance to the SGH in order to raise ethics standards and to develop procedural legislation.

In 1992, Mongolians solidly supported the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP), which won 71 of 76 seats in the SGH. The following year, opposition parties formed the Democratic Coalition and prevailed in the Mongolian presidential election, winning 58 percent of the vote. The Democratic Coalition claimed a parliamentary majority in the 1996 elections by picking up 50 of the 76 seats. The Coalition's 1996 victory was in large part due to the help of IRI's aggressive political party training and by the Democratic Party's (DP) adoption of the Contract with the Mongolian Voter as a campaign centerpiece. During the 1996 campaign the MPRP declined to accept assistance from IRI. The Democratic Coalition's success was soon overshadowed by volatility and unstable leadership. During the subsequent four-year period, Mongolia witnessed the resignation of four prime ministers, all of whom were forced to leave over corruption and scandal allegations. Mongolians elected the MPRP presidential candidate, Bagabandi, in 1997. The MPRP returned to power in the 2000 parliamentary elections, winning 72 of 76 SGH seats.

In 2000, IRI conducted an assessment of Mongolia's political and government institutions. With the results of the assessment, IRI created a three-year strategy to bring about a more competitive political environment and a more transparent and effective legislature. Despite the challenges of its transition, Mongolia is the only country in Central Asia, and one of the few countries throughout Asia, that can boast a pluralistic multi-party system.

In the elections of June, 2004, Mongolia underwent yet another power-shift resulting in an evenly divided SGH. By mid-September 2004, while two seats remained in dispute, the MPRP had retained 36 seats in the SGH, the Motherland Democracy Coalition (MDC), a coalition of opposition parties, picked up 34 seats, independent candidates won

three seats, and the Republican Party secured one seat. This split in the SGH reflected IRI's work towards building a competitive multi-party system. Once the shock of the election results wore off, the MPRP and MDC set up a "Grand Coalition" government, with the leadership positions in the SGH and in government divided evenly. The Prime Minister is from the MDC and the Speaker is from MPRP.

Last winter, however, the SGH balance became slightly unsettled. In December, two of the three MDC leaders (MPs Enkhsaikhan and Erdenebat) officially pulled out of the MDC because of professional and personal conflicts with fellow MDC members in the SGH. As a result, the MDC was officially disbanded within the SGH. For the former MDC government to stay in power, 25 MPs from the Democratic Party (the main party in the MDC) formed an official working group with MPRP in the SGH. This arrangement allows the current government to stay in power as is and the individual "former" MDC ministers and vice ministers to stay in their posts. Since the MDC no longer exists in the SGH, MDC Vice Speaker Oyun was removed from her post as head of the party. A compromise was reached between the major players in the SGH allowing the current government will stay in place for two years, until October, 2006. This winter was also marked by the integration of dozens of new MPs within the SGH and the reconstitution of committees. The SGH session ended in early January and reconvened on April 5, 2005. While the changes in the SGH have been tumultuous, IRI has remained steadfastly non-partisan and has worked to integrate all of the new members of Parliament and encourage further efforts to pass legislation.

On May 22, 2005, Mongolians went back to the polls and resoundingly elected MPRP candidate N. Enkhbayar, former Speaker of the SGH, who succeeds President Bagabandi. The final readjustment in the SGH regarding power-sharing has yet to be determined. A run-off election for President-elect Enkhbayar's seat in the SGH will be held in late August or early September.

### **III. Activities**

#### ***Parliamentary / Party Development Program***

During this quarter, IRI and Mongolian MPs concentrated on building and strengthening the SGH's parliamentary procedures. IRI worked towards its long-term parliamentary program goals, encouraging the IRI-SGH Joint Working Group, which was reconstituted last quarter, to continue to work on the implementation of the new parliamentary procedures and to open discussions regarding the reform of other legislation.

IRI continues to focus on providing personal consultations with individual MPs to solidify their understanding of trainings given last winter and to continue to impart a clearer rationale as to why these reforms are essential for Mongolian democracy. These consultations were conducted personally by IRI Country Director John Poepsel with the support of the IRI-Mongolia staff.

The draft of the Standing Committee rules is on the agenda and will be voted on before the end of July.

### Committee Development

IRI is pleased to report that legislation to improve committee transparency and development has been placed on the agenda for the Spring Parliamentary Session and will be voted on in mid to late July of 2005. IRI has met frequently with a myriad of MPs from both parties to help usher in changes to the system. Having the legislation brought before the SGH is a major step towards improving the democratic workings of the SGH. The Standing Committee rules draft was submitted to the Standing Committee on State Structure and a Working Group to finalize the draft was formed. The final draft was submitted to IRI and IRI's former trainer, Congressional Advisor Ken Kraft for comments and was then given back to the Committee. The draft rule has been circulated and it is expected that it will come up for a vote in July, 2005.

While IRI has met with over 50 MPs in the process of getting the legislation introduced, the main players that IRI has worked with have been: Chairman of the Committee on State Structure Batbold, MP Demberel, MP Gonchigdorj, MP Oyun, MP Enkhsaikhan and MP Idevkhten, along with Secretariat of the SGH Mr. Luvsanjav.

Personal consultations with MPs included discussions of committee rules, duties of the committee chairman, and standardized procedures for each of the 11 standing committees in the SGH. IRI worked closely with individual MPs and was frequently asked to provide information from foreign parliaments on these issues, which supplied. These consultations were conducted personally by IRI Country Director John Poepsel with the support of the IRI-Mongolia staff.

### Ethics Legislation

IRI expects that drafted ethics legislation will be voted on by the SGH in mid to late July. Throughout this quarter, IRI was consistent in bringing up the topic of ethics legislations during meetings with key leaders. The legislation sets higher standards of official conduct for MPs and strengthens the rules of procedure of the Ethics Subcommittee. IRI submitted the draft Ethical Standards for MPs and Ethics Sub-Committee rule draft to SGH Secretariat. The drafts will be submitted by the Secretariat to the SGH for approval probably during the spring session.

Meetings with MPs addressed ethics legislation, its purposes in a democratic government and the positives associated with passage of ethics legislation. While IRI has met with many MPs regarding the issue of ethics legislation, the key MPs that IRI regularly meets and works with include: Chairman of the Committee on State Structure Batbold, Chairman of the Ethics Sub-Committee Gantumur, MPRP Caucus Chair Idevkhten, MP Oyun, MP Enkhsaikhan, MP Gonchigdorj and Secretariat of the SGH Luvsandagva.

### Women's Forum

At the beginning of this quarter, IRI and its domestic partner, the Democratic Women's Union, a Mongolian NGO that promotes women's rights in Mongolia, successfully executed the April 25-27 Women's Forum on Democracy entitled, "Women's Partnership in Politics and Governance." The idea of the forum was proposed in October of 2004 and was supported by USAID and the US Embassy in Mongolia, with particular help from Ambassador Pamela Slutz. Preparations for the event began last quarter, with IRI sponsoring and advising while the Democratic Women's Union supported with organizational help. The forum also featured four IRI-designed workshops that corresponded with the subtopics of the event. The topics were: "women and party politics," "women and state power," "women and political ethics" and "women and civil society."

Focusing on the linkages between women's success and democracy, the Women's Forum provided a unique opportunity to focus on past successes and future expectations for women in Mongolia. The goal of the forum was to develop a long-term plan for increasing the involvement of women in Mongolian politics and to plant seeds of cooperation and foster linkages between women in political parties and civil society at the national level. The forum was an unprecedented success for Mongolian women, featuring most of Mongolia's most powerful women leaders from all segments of society. Furthermore, the event remained non-partisan, with participants focused on the overriding goal rather than on partisan political issues.

In addition to the Mongolian participants, US Ambassador to Mongolia Pamela Slutz, U.S. Ambassador to the United National Commission on the Status of Women Ellen Sauerbrey and IRI Asia Division Director Cynthia Bunton all participated directly in the Forum. Senator Diane Feinstein (D. CA) was also involved, as she filmed a speech to the participants that was shown during the forum. There were also representatives from several international aid groups, including USAID, the United Nations Development Program, the Asia Foundation, and United Nations Development Fund for Women.

IRI and the Democratic Women's Union worked together on many tasks, including: planning the agenda, workshop design, travel and event logistics, and overall management for the event. IRI worked with USAID and the US Embassy in Mongolia to secure approval and funding for the event. IRI also held weekly briefing sessions during the months leading up to the event and daily planning meetings in the last few weeks.

## Presidential Public Opinion Poll

This quarter IRI executed and presented a poll that measured citizen opinions regarding candidates and issues during the lead-up to the May 22<sup>nd</sup> Presidential Elections. IRI presented party-appropriate information to all of the candidates running in the election, as well as to US Embassy officials and other members of the international community. The poll provided useful information on the direction of the country and the issues of importance to Mongolians. IRI's Country Director, John Poepsel, made a full presentation of the poll to USAID and Embassy officials in early May.

## Election Support

### *Poll Watcher Training*

Starting in middle of March, 2005, IRI began conducting party poll watcher trainings throughout the aimags. The intent of these trainings was to ensure that poll watchers were equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively monitor the polls. The methodology of the polls was that a well-informed, educated and responsible poll watcher can serve to greatly reduce the incidents of voter irregularities and violations at polling stations. This perception is reinforced by the observations of previous IRI poll watcher missions for the June, 2004 parliamentary elections and for the October, 2004 local elections.

IRI has continued its poll watcher trainings for the May, 2005 presidential elections for several reasons:

- 1) Mongolia remains strongly politically divided. With neither side enjoying clear dominance, the temptations to manipulate the system are greater than ever. While Mongolia has proven to be a stable democracy, the level of training for many ensuring the legitimacy of the elections is still low
- 2) IRI has not previously conducted poll watcher training for a Presidential election, which has different governing laws and procedures than local and parliament level elections.
- 3) This round of trainings consists of train-the-trainer missions. Many of the participants are the same as in the 2004 elections, but these trainers are being trained to educate others and will perpetuate the process in the future. The participants in these training sessions are expected to train fellow poll watchers in their respective regions and villages.
- 4) The trainings serve as a way to obtain feedback from previous participants about difficulties faced in the elections. This feedback will be used to inform any future training.

IRI developed and printed 8,000 poll watcher manuals that were distributed in the poll watcher trainings and which provided an essential guide leading up to and beyond the presidential elections. Considering the successful, legitimate results of the previous elections, IRI continued with the same basic manual layout that was used for the local

and parliamentary elections of 2004, adjusting the content as necessary for the presidential elections.

#### *Voter Education Posters*

To support the elections further, IRI worked to ensure that voters understood the process of voting and the standards they should expect at the polling location. IRI contracted with a long-standing IRI partner, the Voter Education Center, to publish 6,200 educational posters to put up in polling locations around the country. The posters outline the process of voting as well as show how to fill out a ballot properly.

#### *Election Observation*

IRI provided extensive election observation support for the Presidential election. IRI organized seven observation teams of accredited election observers comprised of the IRI Country Director, IRI local staff, IRI consultants, local ex-pats and IRI contractors (13 observers total). The teams visited 72 polling stations in six aimags and the City of Ulaanbaatar to assess the effectiveness of party poll-watchers. IRI observed the elections at polling stations in Sukhbaatar, Uvurhangai, Arhangai, Drakhan, Selenge, andUvs aimags, along with two teams covering Ulaanbaatar City. The observers met with local election commissions, political party representatives, party poll-watchers, and voters and observed the balloting and the vote count. Prior to Election Day, IRI's efforts were concentrated on training party agent poll-watchers to effectively observe and scrutinize the election process and to document any irregularities at polling stations throughout the country. For the actual election, IRI found no significant voting problems and was impressed with the overall quality of the poll watchers. IRI submitted a report detailing its observations and ideas to the General Election Commission and to USAID.

In addition to this, IRI updated its foreign-observer observation manual and printed out copies for a delegation of foreign observers. IRI also held a poll watcher training for around 20 foreign observers from the US and Japanese embassies.

### **IV. Results**

#### ***Political Party Development Program***

**Result: The October 2004 local elections will be administered in accordance with local election law.**

*Indicator A: Trained political party poll-watchers will promote a transparent election process.*

Project activities accomplished in earlier quarters of this grant.

*Indicator B: The local election law will be administered in a transparent and orderly manner.*

Project activities accomplished in earlier quarters of this grant.

**Result: The presidential elections will address issues of concern to voters and will be conducted in a transparent process.**

*Indicator A: Presidential campaigns will address issues identified in the IRI polls as priorities for voters.*

IRI worked with members of all parties to develop and strengthen their campaigns leading up to the election. The polling data provided by IRI as a result of the national poll allowed parties to hone their messages to address the needs of the people. Corruption, which, in IRI's poll, the greatest number of Mongolians identified as important for the new president to address, became a key point in the front-runners' political strategies.

*Indicator B: Trained party poll agents monitor Election Day activities and appropriately register any complaints of irregularities or fraud.*

IRI created, published and distributed 8000 copies of the poll watcher manuals in preparation for the May 22 election.

IRI created, published and distributed 6,200 voter education posters in preparation for the May 22 election.

IRI conducted poll-watcher trainings, initiated in March and continued through April. There were 18 trainings in all in 18 aimags. The training of trainers sessions instructed experienced poll watchers on how to train others so that poll watching skills can be more widely distributed and the Mongolian trainers will learn how to be teachers for the future.

IRI also conducted its own election observation of the May 22, elections. IRI teams visited 72 polling stations in six aimags and the City of Ulaanbaatar to assess the effectiveness of party poll-watchers and the overall validity of the election. IRI found no significant voting problems and was impressed with the overall quality of the poll watchers. IRI submitted a report detailing its observations and ideas to the General Election Commission and to USAID.

IRI updated and published a limited number of foreign election observation manuals and trained a delegation of around 20 officials from the US and Japanese embassies on election observation techniques.

### ***Parliamentary Development Program***



**Result: The SGH will become more accountable by expanding the public's participation and increasing the input of MPs in the legislative process.**

Indicator A: *Newly elected MPs will develop the skills to work effectively as legislators.*

IRI meets on a very regular basis with members of the SGH and with members of the IRI-SGH Joint Working Group to help train members and encourage the passage of legislation. IRI has consulted extensively with individual MPs to increase their understanding of the topics involved as well as to solidify the work started last winter by consultants from the US House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture and from the German Bundestag.

In addition, the Women's Forum provided a unique opportunity for recently elected women MPs to work together and increase their efficacy.

Indicator B: *At least two committees in the SGH will write rules of procedure that facilitate public hearings.*

No results to report.

Indicator C: *Two or more SGH standing committees will become proficient at holding public hearings which feature testimony by expert witnesses.*

No results to report.

Indicator D: *Committee staff will develop the skills to analyze draft legislation and prepare draft amendments for MPs.*

No results to report.

Indicator E: *The SGH will adopt and implement ethics legislation that raise standards of official conduct for MPs.*

Committee rules and ethics legislation are on the agenda for the Spring Session. It is expected that a version of each will be voted on in July 2005.

## **V. Future Activities**

### Committee Procedures and Public Hearings

IRI will continue to give priority to assisting the implementation of new legislation on parliamentary procedures. IRI will build off the advice that U.S. Congressional expert Kenneth Kraft brought to Ulaanbaatar in December, and will work with Committee chairs to work from the models and examples Mr. Kraft provided. IRI continues to provide extensive consultations with committee chairpersons, members, and staff about drafting committee rules and facilitating public hearings.

### Ethics Legislation

Ethics legislation promoted by the IRI-SGH Joint Working Group has been added to the agenda for the spring session of the SGH, which reconvened on April 5, 2005. IRI will

continue to be heavily involved in this process as the legislation comes to a vote in the SGH this summer.

Poll Watcher Training for constituency #65 by-election. Trainings will be in late July as the election is somewhere between late August and early September.